

- MOYNIHAN, M. 1959. A revision of the family Laridae (Aves). *Amer. Mus. Novitates*, no. 1928: 20.
- MURPHY, R. C. 1936. *Oceanic Birds of South America*. 2: 1057-1071. *Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist.*
- OLIVER, W. R. B. 1955. *New Zealand Birds*. 2nd edn., 2: 308-312. Wellington.
- WALL, L. E. 1956. Southern Black-backed Gull in Tasmania. *Emu*, 56: 433.
- WHITE, C. M. N. 1952. The relationship of African and Palaearctic species. *Ibis*, 94: 164-5.
- WOOD, P. J. 1955. Victorian records of the Dominican Gull. *Emu*, 55: 157.

DENISONIA MONACHUS, A NEW ELAPID SNAKE FROM WESTERN AUSTRALIA

By G. M. STORR, Western Australian Museum, Perth.

Holotype: R20606 (in Western Australian Museum) collected by Mr. John Douglas on June 26, 1963.

Type Locality: Kalgoorlie, Western Australia; Lat. 30° 43' S. Long. 121° 27' E.

Paratypes (all in Western Australian Museum): R21217 (Overlander, 20 mi. E. of Hamelin Pool), R9845 (Bluff Point, Geraldton), R1718-9 and R21221 (Newmarracarra), R2918 (Mingenew), R4843 (Three Springs), R15132 (Perenjori), R1273-4 (Bunjil), R6589 (Gidgee, 60 mi. N. of Sandstone), R1111 and R2992 (Booylgoo Spring), R14368 and R19776-7 (Kathleen Valley), R11475 (Laver-ton), R17682 (Mt. Margaret), R450 ("Goldfields"), and R15084 (Naretha).

Diagnosis: Of the black-headed species of *Denisonia* with 15 rows of dorsals, *monachus* is most like *gouldi* (Gray), from which it is distinguishable by its single posterior temporal and its unbroken black hood which extends on to the first 1-5 (mostly 3 or 4) vertebrae. [*D. gouldi* has 2 posterior temporals, and the black of the hood, except in melanic specimens, is broken by a pale spot on the preocular, etc. and extends back to the first 5-8 (mostly 6 or 7) vertebrae.]

Description: A small, moderately slender snake with a depressed head and short tail (10-12% of total length). Largest specimen (R11475: 453 (408 + 45) mm. No canthus rostralis.

Rostral wider than high. Nasal entire and almost always in contact with the single preocular, either forming a short suture with it or merely touching it. Suture between internasals nearly always shorter than suture between prefrontals. Frontal from $1\frac{1}{4}$ to a little more than $1\frac{1}{2}$ times as long as wide, as long as or slightly shorter than the suture between the parietals, and from $2\frac{1}{4}$ to $3\frac{1}{4}$ times as wide as supraocular. Two subequal postoculars. One (in 30% of specimens) or two anterior temporals (the lower occasionally reaching the lip). One posterior temporal. Six upper labials, the first smallest, the last largest, and the third and fourth entering the orbit. Seven lower labials, the last smallest, the fourth largest, and the first three (occasionally four) in contact with the anterior chin-

shield. Dorsal scale rows 15 at mid-body. Ventrals 155-172 (av. 163). Anal entire. Subcaudals single, 25-32 (av. 28.6).

Head and nape unbroken shiny black. Remainder of upper surface bright reddish brown. Lips and entire under surface white.

Distribution: Southern Western Australia from about Latitude 27° south to Geraldton, Three Springs, Bunjil and Kalgoorlie, and east to Laverton and Naretha.

Comments: The distribution of *monachus* is generally north of that of *gouldi*, which extends as far north as Watheroo, Dalwallinu, Koorda, Merredin, Corinthian (11 m. NW of Southern Cross), Hampton Hill (17 mi. E of Kalgoorlie) and the trans-Australian railway eastwards from Rawlinna. The two species are thus sympatric only in the Kalgoorlie district. The specimen of *gouldi* from Hampton Hill (R3749) shows no intergradation with *monachus*, nor do any other *gouldi* (e.g., from Watheroo, Dalwallinu and Rawlinna) from near the range of *monachus*.

The name *monachus* (Latin for "monk") alludes to the black hood.

FIRST OCCURRENCE OF THE RUFF IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA

By DEAN FISHER, Beverley.

The Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*) is a Palearctic breeding species which during the northern winter migrates south to the southern part of this area and throughout the Ethiopian and Oriental regions. It is a vagrant to North America but was unknown from the Australasian region until January, 1962, when the first Australian specimen, a female which is known as the Reeve, was collected at Pt. Gawler, South Australia (A. McEvey, *The Emu*, 63, 1963: 35).

Now the second Australian specimen and the first occurrence in Western Australia may be recorded. On October 29, 1963, I collected a specimen of the Reeve at the Lower King River about six miles north-east of Albany. The bird had been discovered the previous day by Mr Arnold McGill, Mr Fred Johnston, and myself when we were studying a large number of waders feeding far out on the tidal mudflats of the river just above the bridge at the upper end of Oyster Harbour. The Reeve was in the company of four Sharp-tailed Sandpipers (*Erolia acuminata*) from which it was distinguished by its slightly larger size and generally more erect stance. Closer study showed that it lacked the prominent stripe above the eye and rusty colour on top of the head of the Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, but in all other characteristics including manner of feeding it appeared in the field to be nearly identical with this species. It seemed to prefer the company of the Sharp-tailed Sandpipers to nearby Greenshanks (*Tringa nebularia*), Little Stints (*Erolia ruficollis*) and a Curlew Sandpiper (*E. ferruginea*). All the waders were very restless and wary and it was impossible to study the Reeve closer than 150 yards and it was never seen well in flight. A 30